(b) Rs. 60.33 crores to be realised on account of import of fatty acids.

(c) Rs. 3.00 crores as investment made in Tea Trading Corporation of India (TTCI), a wholly owned subsidiary of STC.

The Board of Directors of STC considered the comments and keeping in view the facts that the amounts at (a) & (b) above are debts to be realised from the Government and sale of tea gardens is under process in TTCI, the Board decided not to make any provisions for these amounts. The shareholders of STC in the Annual General Meeting also approved the stand taken by STC Board.

Import of Rubber and its Impact on prices in Indian Market

962. SHRI M.A. BABY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to allow import of rubber during the next year;

(b) if so, the details of quantity proposed to be imported;

(c) the quantity of natural rubber imported during this year;

(d) whether Government are aware of the impact of import on the price of rubber in the Indian Market; and

(e) if so, the response of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise

(c) The Government have not allowed import of rubber duty free during the current financial year, so far. 8990 Tonne of natural rubber have been imported during April to September, 1996 by Rubber Goods Exporters under Advance Licence/Special Import Licence.

(d) and (e) Since import is generally allowed to the minimum extent required to bridge the gap between indigeneous demand and supply, it does not affect the market adversely.

Study on Child Labour in Beedi Industry

963. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether any study has been done on the extent of child labour in beedi industry in the country;

(b) if so, the date of such a study;

(c) the recommendations of this study; and

(d) the steps taken to implement recommendations for elimination of child labour in the beedi industry?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) While no specific study has been done recently on the extent of child labour in beedi industry in the country, the Labour Bureau, in a report "The working and living conditions of workers in Beedi Industry in India" has indicated that in beedi industry about 31% of home workers were men, 68% women and 1% were children.

(b) The report was published on 10th October, 1995.

(c) and (d) Though there was no specific recommendation relating to child labour in beedi industry, Government has already taken steps for rehabilitation of child labour working in hazardous occupations including beedi industry. So far 76 child labour projects have been sanctioned to cover about 1.5 lakh children. Under the projects the children withdrawn from work are put special schools where they are provided with non-formal education vocational training, nutrition, health check and stipend.

Poor quality of Wheat and Rice supplied through Fair Price Shops

964. SHRI GYAN RANJAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that wheat and rice supplied through Fair Price Shops are of very poor quality;

(b) whether any surprise checks of the Fair Price Shops are conducted to check the quality; and

(c) if so, action taken against the owners of Fair Price Shops if the quality is found poor?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) No, Sir. The Public Distribution System (PDS) is implemented under joint responsibility by Central Government and State Governments/UT Administrations. Central Government makes bulk allocations of items under PDS including wheat and rice to all the States/UTs. Only the good quality of wheat and rice free from insect infestation and conforming to Prevention of Food Adulteration Act (PFA) standards are issued by Food Corporation of India (FCI) for distribution through PDS outlets. States/UTs are allowed to inspect all stocks at godowns before accepting the same and have the right to reject stocks not conforming to the prescribed quality standards.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. Surprise checks by the officers of State Governments as well as officers of the quality control cell of Union Food Ministry are conducted to check quality of foodgrains at Fair Price Shops. As the operational responsibility of PDS is of State Governments/UT Administrations, therefore, in case the quality of foodgrains supplied through FPS is found poor, not conforming to prescribed standards, concerned State Government/UT Administration takes necessary action under Essential Commodities Act, Blackmarketing Act etc.

Joint sampling of coal at power station end in Gujarat

965. SHRIMATI ANANDIBEN JETHABHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Gujarat Elctricity Board has been requesting the Coal India Ltd. for joint sampling of coal at power station end;

(b) if so, the reasons why the old practice of joint sampling at the power station end was discontinued;

(c) whether there is any dispute between the CIL and GEB on the amount involved in this respect;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether any State Electricity Board has requested the Central Government for the creation of an insurance fund to take care of the loss of revenue incurred by SEB for short supply of coal; and

(f) if so, the action taken or proposed by Central Government or the CIL in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) Yes, Madam.

(b) In keeping with World-wide commercial practice, the loading end is the logical one for ascertaining the quality and quantity of coal despatches to consumers. This is also in accordance with the Sale of Goods Act, 1930.

(c) and (d) There have been claims from Gujarat Electricity Board (GEB) regarding grade slippages in coal supplies. These claims have since been settled through mutual discussions between GEB and Coal companies.

(e) No, Madam.

(f) Does not arise in view of (e) above.

Handing over of land to Rubber Board at Industrial Estate, Kottayam

966. SHRI JOY NADUKKARA: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal for handing over 6 acres of land at the industrial estate, Ettumanoor, Kottayam, Kerala to Rubber Board which has been addressed to Additional Secretary and Development Commisioner, Small Scale Industry, Government of India and is pending for action;

(b) the reasons for delay in taking decision thereon; and

(c) whether it will be considered formally?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, a request was received from Chairman, Rubber Board for 6 acres of land to be given to them at the Industrial Estate, Ettumanoor, Kottayam, Kerala. The Production Centre at Ettumanoor, Kerala is presently being utilised for providing technical training to the local entrepreneurs.

(c) Does not arise.